



**California Department of Veterans Affairs
Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, January 14, 2004**

Location

Medal of Honor Hall
California Department of Veterans Affairs
1227 O Street
Sacramento, California, 95814

Participants

DVBE

- Allen Amaro
- Larry Brooks
- Gene Farnsworth
- Don Gonneville
- Ken Jackson
- Michael Johnson
- Floyd Knox
- Rondia Moss
- Bob Mulz
- Kevin O'Connor
- Mike O'Connor
- John Rak
- Francis Trottier
- Tim Voors
- Bob Yaap
- A.J. Wilson

CDVA

- Sheryl Schmidt, acting deputy secretary, operations and administration and deputy secretary, women veterans affairs
- Ralph Cansimbe, HQ operations manager, Veterans Services Division (VSD)
- Steve Dakota, marketing/community relations coordinator, VSD

DGS

- Mariel Dennis, chief, Office of Small Business and DVBE Certification
- Gloria Anderson
- Patti Connors
- Lori Okamoto

Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee

- Burt McChesney, chief consultant

DVBE Advisory Council Members Absent

- Alison Boyle
- Jerry Caton
- Jim Stanfield
- Larry Turner

Welcome and Introductions

Don Gonneville, co-chair, CDVA DVBE Advisory Council, opened the meeting at 10:10 a.m. and introduced Co-Chair Ralph Cansimbe, HQ operations manager, Veterans Services Division, CDVA.

Mr. Cansimbe asked the council members and guests to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Cansimbe called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 19 meeting.

Motion made by Tim Voors, seconded by Ken Jackson.

All council members were in favor. Minutes approved at 10:15 a.m.

Program Update

Mr. Cansimbe said that Glen Halsey's position would be filled shortly. He said the two DVBE advocate positions would not be filled by involuntary transfers, and could be filled within two to three weeks for outreach and recruitment. Once filled, he said, the Advisory Council would begin working with other agencies.

Mr. Gonneville welcomed Rondia Moss and Mike O'Connor as new council members. He said Jerry Caton's father had passed away so he couldn't attend the meeting, and that health problems prevented Alison Boyle and Jim Stanfield from attending. Mr.

Gonneville reminded the council to stick to the rules of the meeting. He said, "Discussion is good, we don't always agree but will do so in a friendly way."

Legislative Update

Burt McChesney, chief consultant, Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs, addressed the council at 10:21 a.m. He said the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee voted on January 13 to approve AB1592. This bill seeks to implement suggestions from the state auditor's report. Mr. McChesney handed out a "mock" draft of the bill and said it would go to Appropriations the following week. Mr. McChesney welcomed questions from council members.

Robert Yaap asked how to get suggestions to Mr. McChesney.

The chief consultant handed out business cards and told the council members to call him with suggestions or questions.

Tim Voors asked when the last changes to the bill could be made.

Mr. McChesney stated it could be refined through June or perhaps even later.

Allen Amaro told Mr. McChesney that he felt significant changes should be made to AB1592. Mr. Amaro said, "We need to discuss this as early as possible. It rewrites 999 from the Vets Code."

Mr. McChesney stated, "No it doesn't."

Mr. Amaro said, "I didn't interrupt you, please let me speak."

Mr. McChesney said, "We are not changing that law (999)."

Mr. Amaro asked, "It takes out the requirement of California residency, am I wrong there?"

Mr. McChesney said he didn't know and would check into it.

Mr. Amaro said, "We need to look into this. We don't want to shoot ourselves in the foot. Thank You Mr. McChesney."

Francis Trottier asked, "When will we get an answer on the California residency requirement question?"

Mr. McChesney stated he would look into it after leaving the meeting. He thanked the Council for their time and received an ovation from them.

Mr. McChesney left the meeting at 10:31 a.m.

Mr. Gonneville asked Gloria Anderson of DGS about SB 1008.

Ms. Anderson discussed the requirement that DVBE's submit federal tax returns to DGS in order to be certified.

Mr. Voors asked her why federal tax returns are required.

Ms. Anderson asked, "Allen, can you help me out on this one?"

Mr. Amaro said, "It's one way to make sure DVBE's are state residents. It's a state program so DGS wants to make sure those certified are state residents."

Mariel Dennis said tax returns help DGS see if the applicant meets the required criteria.

Bob Mulz said, "My biggest grumble and gripe is that once a person certifies as a DVBE he should be considered innocent until proven otherwise."

Mr. Yaap said, "This tax info becomes a privacy issue. If you're a DVBE you almost have to be a SBE because we're being treated the same. There are too many hoops to jump through. I'm concerned potential DVBE's are shying away from dealing with the state."

Michael Johnson said the intent of requiring tax forms is to verify the business and it seems "intrusive."

Ms. Anderson said she assures applicants the only reason tax returns are requested is because it's a requirement.

Ms. Dennis said, "It's the law and a requirement to provide tax returns. We don't mandate dual certification, but we do educate DVBE's on it, it's good customer service."

Gene Farnsworth said, "I want clarification from DGS what is being done with tax returns."

Ms. Dennis said the returns were kept in locked file cabinets and no one unauthorized is allowed access. When we look at the returns, we're just checking that there's no conflicting information on the application and for location of business."

Mr. Trottier said he was "absolutely opposed" to submitting tax returns.

Mike O'Connor said, "Francis, I'm glad to see we can agree on something. I fail to comprehend that we have the wrong DGS people here. Goals are not being met. We're playing to the wrong audience. The people we should have in here are the one's who can make decisions. Who is meeting their goals? Where are these agencies? DVBE's are going broke because of the way things are structured. I want to see someone from DGS audit committee here."

Mr. Gonneville said, “We will be working on this later.”

Mike O’Connor asked, “Gloria, can you spend an hour at the next meeting with a whiteboard and go item by item? People are hearing what they want to hear.”

Mr. Farnsworth said he liked Mike’s idea to have Ms. Anderson go through the regulations at the next meeting and wanted it noted in the Minutes.

Ms. Dennis asked, “What do you want us to do? Let’s clarify.”

Mike O’Connor said, “DVBE requirements, etc.”

Ms. Dennis said, “We’ll do whatever you want us to do, whenever you want. We’re happy to help.”

Mr. Gonneville called for a lunch break.

Adjourn for Lunch at 11:32 a.m.

Reconvene at 12:41 p.m.

DGS Legislative Update

Mr. Gonneville turned the meeting over to Mariel Dennis at 12:42 p.m.

Ms. Dennis introduced Lori Okamoto who handed out printed material on placing free contract advertisements with the California State Contracts Register.

Ms. Okamoto spoke about upcoming events: SB/DVBE Forum February 26 and April 14; October 21 (IT Goods and Services) at DGS. Ms. Okamoto handed out copies of the DVBE Exemption List and asked the council to provide her with a list of DVBE suppliers.

Ms. Dennis distributed copies of New Legislation for 2004 and covered various bills of concern. There was a brief discussion on DGS policy and procedures. Ms. Dennis said, “We don’t have written policies and procedures. We’ve been working on it, but we just haven’t gotten there. Meanwhile, the laws keep changing.”

Mr. Gonneville ended the discussion at 1:26 p.m.

Letters: Governor’s Office ETC.

Mr. Gonneville suggested the council establish a dialogue with a series of letters to the Governor’s Office, agency heads, and all legislators. There was a brief discussion on what the council wants to convey to the recipients in the letters.

Larry Brooks said, “We need to have the Governor’s Office reaffirm the executive order.”

Ken Jackson suggested goal participation from department heads be submitted to the governor.

Tim Voors suggested the council urge the governor to appoint a permanent director of CDVA.

It was decided letters would be formatted and sent out to the council via email for approval.

Caltrans

Mr. Gonneville noted that observers to the council meetings couldn’t be recognized and said, “We **can** recognize Olivia Fonseca and Bessie Papailias from Caltrans,” at 1:44 p.m.

They introduced themselves and told the council they, as well as Caltrans, were firmly committed to the DVBE program and would continue being committed advocates. The council gave them an ovation.

DVBE Advocate

Mr. Gonneville said he wanted the statewide DVBE advocate present at all council meetings.

Mr. Farnsworth motioned that the DVBE advocate attend meetings.

Michael O’Connor seconded.

The motion states that **when** the statewide DVBE Advocate is appointed by the governor, that person be invited to sit among the council as a **non-voting member**.

Mr. Amaro questioned who would appoint the advocate. He asked, “Will the governor or CDVA appoint the Advocate?”

Mr. Cansimbe said that AB409 specifies CDVA will appoint the statewide DVBE Advocate.

Mr. Voors said to modify the motion so that **whoever** is appointed advocate will be invited.

Mr. Gonneville said the advocate would be invited either way and asked for the council to vote on the motion.

All were in favor with none opposed and no abstentions at 2 p.m.

Afternoon Break

Reconvene at 2:23 p.m.

Mr. Gonneville told the council Steve Dakota, marketing/community relations coordinator, VSD, CDVA, had applied for the DVBE outreach, recruitment and education coordinator position again.

Mr. Cansimbe said that Mr. Dakota was under consideration for the position.

Mr. Amaro motioned supporting Mr. Dakota as DVBE outreach, recruitment and education coordinator, seconded by Mike O'Connor.

Mr. Gonneville asked the council to vote.

All in favor, none opposed. No abstentions.

Olivia Fonseca/CalTrans

Mr. Gonneville introduced Olivia Fonseca of Caltrans at 2:27 p.m.

Ms. Fonseca confirmed Caltrans' commitment to the DVBE Program and said they had exceeded their goals. She told the council she definitely respected them and their duty.

Publishing of Minutes

Mr. Gonneville said with the council's approval, CDVA DVBE meeting minutes would be posted in various related websites.

A.J. Wilson motioned, seconded by Bob Mulz.

The motion was restructured to indicate the minutes would not be posted on related websites until the council approves them. The council voted, all in favor. None opposed, no abstentions at 2:34 p.m.

Vets Homes Project

Bob Mulz said architects he had contacted were not returning phone calls.

Mr. Gonneville said George Andres had showed up for the previous meeting one day late.

Kevin O'Connor said he would attempt to contact the architects.

Next Meetings

Mr. Gonneville and the council lined up the dates for upcoming meetings:

- March 16
- May 20
- July 15
- September 16
- November 18

DVBE Related Events

There was a heated discussion about which DVBE organizations that sponsor events should be posted on various websites and in Advisory Council minutes. This was sparked from an announcement about the Alliance's upcoming April event, Keeping the Promise.

Mr. Gonneville said, "For the record, the Alliance and Advisory Council are two separate entities."

Mr. Voors motioned that any DVBE event be noted within the minutes for public record.

A.J. Wilson seconded.

All in favor? No one opposed or abstained. DVBE related events will be entered into the minutes.

Open Forum

Mr. Amaro said he wanted the minutes to reflect that he was requesting, for the sixth time, how much money CDVA spends contracting with DVBEs. Mr. Amaro said, "I want to know which DVBEs do business with CDVA. I want to know how much money is spent and what percentage participation goal is met. Please put this request in the minutes."

Closing Remarks

Mr. Cansimbe thanked the council and reaffirmed that CDVA maintains support and will strive for consistency even though Glen Halsey had retired. He said Mr. Dakota and staff are doing a great job helping out. Mr. Cansimbe said, "We will continue to support DVBE issues. Positions will be filled as soon as possible. Secretary Tuttle wants to replace Glen as soon as possible. I will continue to carry your agenda forward. Bear with us a little longer."

Final Questions

Floyd Knox reiterated Mr. Amaro's question regarding DVBE business with CDVA.

Mike O'Connor asked, "Why can't it be documented?"

Mr. Amaro said, "Caltrans has a tracker-a quarterly report. I've given this information to Sheryl. CDVA must track and report. If you put out a number, it has to be verifiable."

Mike O'Connor asked, "Ralph, when is a good time to get definitive numbers on DVBE dollars?"

Mr. Cansimbe said, "My recommendation is to note this issue in the minutes and continue to document DVBE figures."

Adjournment

Mr. Gonneville adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.